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Measures taken in the United Nations system to accelerate progress in the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Report of the Secretary-General

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, adopted resolution 54/218 of 22 December 1999, entitled "Implementation of and follow-up to the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the nineteenth special session of the General Assembly". In that resolution the Assembly, *inter alia*, emphasized the importance of the continued active and collaborative involvement of all relevant bodies of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21[1] and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21.[2] The Assembly requested the Secretary-General, in close collaboration with all relevant bodies of the United Nations system, and taking into account the outcome of the deliberations of the Commission on Sustainable Development, to submit to the Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session, through the Economic and Social Council, an analytical report on the measures taken within the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21, including the identification of constraints and recommendations on how to address those constraints.

2. At its fifteenth meeting, held in New York on 24 and 25 January 2000, the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development (IACSD) considered, among other items, preparation of the above-mentioned report. The Committee agreed that the report would follow the structure of the previous report[3] prepared for the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly to ensure continuity of information, that it would focus on matters of strategic importance related to collaboration within the United Nations system in the field of sustainable development and would identify the main challenges and constraints in that area. Furthermore, the report would highlight the main conclusions reached by IACSD and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) that needed to be brought to the attention of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The Committee also decided that the report would provide a brief update of actions required in follow-up to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other intergovernmental bodies.

II. Work under way in the United Nations system to accelerate the implementation of Agenda 21 and the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21

Recent developments in the Inter-Agency Committee on Sustainable Development

3. Since the submission of the previous report in June 1999, IACSD has met twice to continue its work in promoting cooperation and joint action within the United Nations system and to ensure coordinated responses to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development and other relevant intergovernmental bodies and processes.[4] The Committee held its fourteenth meeting in Vienna on 9 and 10 September 1999 and its fifteenth meeting in New York on 24 and 25 January 2000.

4. During the meetings, IACSD considered standing items on follow-up to the outcome of ACC meetings, including the report of the Secretary-General on the causes of conflict and the promotion of durable peace and sustainable development in Africa,[5] as well as the ACC statement on the impact of climate change and depletion of renewable resources affecting small island developing States.

5. IACSD also reviewed matters related to the outcome of the deliberations at the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council and considered the follow-up to the seventh session as well as preparations for the eighth and ninth sessions of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The Committee welcomed the establishment by the General Assembly of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction as the successor arrangement to the International Decade for Natural Disaster Reduction. It took note of the establishment of an Inter-Agency Task Force on Disaster Reduction under the auspices of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction and requested members serving on the Task Force to report to the Committee on issues of relevance to the work of IACSD.

6. At its fourteenth and fifteenth meetings, IACSD further discussed the establishment of an Environmental Management Group, as proposed by the

Secretary-General in his report to the fifty-third session of the General Assembly on environment and human settlements.[6] IACSD expressed strong interest in working with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in designing specific modalities for the Group. It underscored the need for the United Nations system to share a common view with respect to the mandate, terms of reference, membership and working methods of the Group. During its fifteenth meeting, the Committee considered the draft terms of reference of the Environmental Management Group prepared by UNEP as a result of the consultative process and endorsed it with some amendments.

7. At both meetings IACSD also considered the results of the joint IACSD/Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions/Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality working meeting on the task manager approach. The Committee supported the general thrust of the recommendations of the joint meeting and reiterated its view that other standing committees of ACC might also benefit from the task manager approach. The Committee agreed that the main objectives of the expansion of the task manager approach were:

(a) To avoid multiple inter-agency mechanisms at the global level for policy coordination in any given thematic area;

(b) To facilitate coordinated implementation of the outcomes of major world conferences and summits and their respective periodic reviews, taking into account the evolving political context;

(c) To promote better coordination and complementarity between policy development and normative functions of the United Nations system at the global level with activities of United Nations organizations carried out individually and/or jointly at the regional and national levels.

8. At its fifteenth meeting, the Committee was informed that, while the Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions supported the proposals of IACSD, in view of the nature of its work, in particular its focus on more operational issues, the Consultative Committee would continue to rely mainly on ad hoc arrangements in carrying out its work. It was agreed that IACSD might return to this issue when the results of the review of the functioning of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and its subsidiary machinery become available.

9. In considering matters related to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, IACSD reviewed inter-agency arrangements in support of the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Among other decisions, the Committee reaffirmed the list of task managers for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. Also under this item, the Committee agreed on arrangements for the preparation of the reports of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly.

10. Regarding preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, IACSD stressed the need for active involvement of the United Nations system to ensure high-quality preparations for this event and its successful outcome. While final decisions on the preparatory process will be taken by Governments at the fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly, the Committee emphasized the importance of early and timely contributions from the United Nations system. The Committee agreed that a proactive approach could include the following early actions:

(a) Expediting the preparation of the second critical trends report and related modelling work so as to make public at an early stage their findings;

(b) Preparing the second ACC statement on sustainable development;

(c) Strengthening the United Nations system's outreach to the general public.

11. IACSD further stressed the need for clearly establishing the goals of the 2002 review. The Committee felt that, while Agenda 21 remains a vital and most comprehensive international programme in the field of sustainable development, the 2002 review should not be limited to the state of the implementation of its specific provisions. Preparations for the review should critically assess the impact of new developments and emerging challenges and the ways of addressing them. These could include globalization, information technology, governance and the growing magnitude of natural disasters.

12. The Committee agreed that a number of ongoing processes could contribute to the 2002 review. These include the outcome of the Intergovernmental Forum

on Forests; the outcome of the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development on the issue of energy; the preparation by UNEP of the third Global Environmental Outlook; the third assessment report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change; and the outcome of the high-level international intergovernmental event on financing for development.

13. The Committee also agreed that the governing bodies of the United Nations agencies with major mandates and programmes in the field of sustainable development should be involved in the preparations for the 2002 review. The Committee stressed that non-governmental organizations (NGOs), the private sector and other major groups should actively participate in the 2002 review process.

Recent developments in the Subcommittee on Water Resources of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

14. The ACC Subcommittee on Water Resources held its twentieth session in Geneva from 4 to 8 October 1999. At that session the Subcommittee reviewed its method of work and agreed that its current procedures called for substantial improvement. The Subcommittee discussed the fresh direction and focus of its future activities and reached agreement on a new approach to the organization and conduct of its meetings. It requested the independent consultant whose service had been obtained in respect of this matter to take account of the Subcommittee's decisions in finalizing the consultant's report on the method of the work of the Subcommittee, which would be used as an input into a report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. In a one-day special session held in The Hague on 23 March 2000, immediately after the second World Water Forum and Ministerial Conference, the Subcommittee discussed the findings of the consultant's report and agreed on the final outline and contents of the above-mentioned report of the Secretary-General.

15. At its twentieth meeting the Subcommittee also reviewed its work on the preparation of the report of the Secretary-General on progress made in providing safe water and sanitation for all during the 1990s. The report will be submitted to the General Assembly for consideration at its fifty-fifth session through the Commission on Sustainable Development and the Economic and Social Council. Following a review of detailed proposals made by the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and adopted by the Economic and Social Council in its resolution 1999/47 of 28 July 1999, the Subcommittee agreed that the report should follow the proposed outline and content while ensuring a balanced approach.

16. The Subcommittee continued its discussion on the preparation of the biennial *World Water Development Report*, which is expected for publication in 2002 as part of the newly established World Water Assessment Programme, to be developed in line with the recommendation by the World Water Forum in The Hague. It explored various alternatives of collaboration with non-United Nations bodies and assessed options for setting up an independent unit to produce the report on its behalf. The Subcommittee endorsed the proposal for the report's two-part structure, with one part focusing on a specific theme and the other an overview of trends and analysis. The Subcommittee recommended that the theme of the first edition in 2002 should be "Progress in Implementation of chapter 18 of Agenda 21", to coincide with the 10-year review of Agenda 21 in the same year. At an expert group meeting held in New York in January 2000, members of the Subcommittee and experts further discussed the data requirements, format and methodological issues of the report. At the one-day special meeting held in The Hague, the Subcommittee further reviewed the institutional arrangements for the production of the report and agreed that an independent unit would be set up and housed in the headquarters of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) beginning in June 2000.

17. In considering other matters, the Subcommittee evaluated the observance of the 1999 World Day for Water. The Subcommittee acknowledged the need for system-wide efforts in this regard and agreed that it should be responsible for providing the necessary support to governments for the observance of the World Day for Water. The Subcommittee confirmed that UNESCO will be the lead agency for organizing activities in celebration of the 2000 World Day for Water, the theme of which will be "Water for the twenty-first century". It was further agreed that the theme for the following two years would be "Water and health" (2001) and "Water for development" (2002).

Recent developments in the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas of the Administrative Committee on Coordination

18. Follow-up to decision 7/1 on oceans and seas, adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session, has been a key item in the work of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, which met informally in August 1999 and formally at its eighth session from 19 to 21 January 2000. At both meetings, the Subcommittee discussed at length the implementation of decision 7/1 and reviewed its continuing collaboration with the Commission. On the issue of its improved transparency, effectiveness and responsiveness to member States, the Subcommittee recommended a number of concrete measures for implementation, which were subsequently endorsed by IACSD at its fourteenth meeting. These included:

(a) Regular annual briefings by members of the Subcommittee to delegations and interested observers during every session of the Commission on Sustainable Development;

(b) Briefings on the work of the Subcommittee to Governments and agency representatives during regular sessions of the respective governing bodies;

(c) Development of the Subcommittee's own web site, linked to those of ACC and the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(d) Producing a brochure to be made available at the briefings.

19. In its discussion on the new informal consultative process on ocean affairs launched by the General Assembly in resolution 54/33 of 24 November 1999, the Subcommittee acknowledged the concerns of the General Assembly over the need for increased coordination and cooperation on ocean issues. It also noted that coordinated action depends on the due process of endorsement and financing by each member agency's governing structure. In this connection, the Subcommittee agreed that it would report to IACSD and the ocean consultative process on the following major initiatives and activities:

(a) Active contributions to the system-wide reporting to various intergovernmental bodies;

(b) Joint production of the United Nations Atlas of the Oceans;

(c) Implementation of the Global Programme of Action for the Protection of the Marine Environment from Land-based Activities;

(d) Assisting in implementation of the Global International Water Assessment;

(e) Improving the functioning and effectiveness of the Joint Group of Experts on the Scientific Aspects of Marine Environmental Protection;

(f) Ensuring coordinated inputs on oceans and coastal areas for the 10-year review of Agenda 21.

20. The Subcommittee also considered the status of the implementation of the Global Programme of Action. A number of activities were highlighted in the discussions. These include:

(a) The launching of the Global Programme of Action central clearing house node and the development of the pollutant source category nodes by partner agencies;

(b) Agreement on the roles and responsibilities of the Subcommittees on Water Resources and on Oceans and Coastal Areas in the implementation of the Programme of Action;

(c) The formulation of a sewerage action plan and the assessment of the feasibility to hold a global conference on sewerage in 2001;

(d) Preparations for the first intergovernmental review meeting on the Programme of Action in 2001, including the development of a framework for reporting and sharing of experiences by partners in the implementation of the Programme.

Recent developments in other inter-agency processes

Ad Hoc Inter-Agency Task Force on Energy

21. At its twelfth meeting held in September 1998, IACSD established an ad hoc inter-agency task force on energy with a view to ensuring contributions of all relevant organizations of the United Nations system to the work of the Commission on Sustainable Development on energy and transport. The task force held its first meeting in April 1999, in conjunction with the first session of the Committee on Energy and

Natural Resources for Development. At that meeting the task force agreed on the scope and approach of its work and on the establishment of an electronic network to facilitate information sharing and coordination.

22. The task force met for its second meeting in Vienna on 8 September 1999 to continue its preparations for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. The task force considered the issues and reporting requirements emanating from the first session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development and discussed the issue of financing for energy development. It also reviewed the draft reports prepared for the first Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and made arrangements for the preparation of reports for the second session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development scheduled for August 2000. In addition, the task force continued its discussion on ways and means to best coordinate the matrix of United Nations system activities in the field of energy and on the elaboration of a common system-wide approach to energy and sustainable development.

23. The third meeting of the task force took place on 13 March 2000 in New York. At that meeting the task force reviewed the outcome of the first session of the Ad Hoc Open-ended Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Energy and Sustainable Development and agreed on the general considerations that need to be taken into account in preparing for the Group's second session. In this regard, the task force noted the request of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts to prepare case studies on specific issues discussed during the Group's first session. The task force agreed that the case studies should cover all key issues, while focusing on successful policies, and should present examples from all regions. During the meeting the task force also addressed the request of the Intergovernmental Group of Experts for the matrix of United Nations system activities in the field of energy, which had been prepared to facilitate coordination of activities and enhance cooperation among United Nations entities/agencies preparing for the ninth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development. It was decided to review and update the matrix before making it public on the web site of the Division for Sustainable Development of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs. The task force also reviewed the arrangements for documentation, including the preparations for the second session of the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources for Development, scheduled for August 2000.

Inter-agency work in support of the implementation of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests and in support of the Intergovernmental Forum on Forests of the Commission on Sustainable Development

24. The informal, high-level Inter-Agency Task Force on Forests (ITFF) has continued its cooperation in support of the implementation of the outcome of the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF) of the Commission on Sustainable Development and in support of the Commission's Intergovernmental Forum on Forests (IFF). The Task Force focused its recent work on the preparation of the fourth session of IFF, which was held in New York from 31 January to 11 February 2000. In addition, the Task Force undertook a number of activities to assist nine government-led initiatives in support of the implementation of the IFF programme of work. In August 1999, ITFF launched a Directory of forest-related international and regional institutions and instruments on the web site of the IFF secretariat. The Task Force also met with representatives of major groups during the third and fourth sessions of IFF to explore the possibilities of their increased participation in future activities of the Task Force. The members of the Task Force welcomed suggestions from major groups to ensure transparency and involvement in the implementation of IPF/IFF's proposals for action. The final report of IFF recognizes the Task Force as a consolidated partnership mechanism to further advance inter-agency cooperation in supporting sustainable forest management and the full implementation of the IPF/IFF proposals for action. It also invites the executive heads of relevant organizations of the United Nations system and heads of relevant international and regional organizations, institutions and instruments to form a collaborative partnership on forests, which could build on the work of the Task Force, for promoting coordinated and cooperative action, including joint programming submissions of coordinated proposals to their respective governing bodies. The Task Force is scheduled to meet in the near future to further explore the possibilities of increased

cooperation at the national level, especially as regards national forest programmes.

III. United Nations system response to the outcomes of the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development

Sustainable tourism

25. At its fourteenth and fifteenth meetings, IACSD considered follow-up activities to decision 7/3 on tourism and sustainable development adopted by the Commission on Sustainable Development at its seventh session. At both meetings IACSD was briefed by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) on its ongoing and planned activities, including those undertaken in collaboration with organizations of the United Nations system and major groups in implementing the international work programme on sustainable tourism development contained in decision 7/3. In this regard, IACSD welcomed the work by WTO on organizing and convening the first meeting of the ad hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism.

26. At its fifteenth meeting, IACSD heard an oral report by the representative of WTO on the result of the first meeting of the ad hoc informal open-ended working group on tourism, which was held in Costa Rica, on 20 and 21 January 2000. The working group first addressed procedural issues, including its composition, methods of work and funding. Participants then discussed the role of the working group and reached agreement on the priorities of its programme of activities. Among the priorities identified were capacity-building, development and application of indicators for sustainable tourism, preparations for the International Year of Ecotourism (2002) and assessment of the net income that accrues to the local economy from tourism. Lead and assisting agencies were assigned to each of the priority areas. IACSD stressed the importance of further supporting and strengthening the working group, the first multi-stakeholder working group with participation of both Governments and major group representatives, so as to ensure continuity in the implementation of the international work programme on sustainable tourism development.

Changing production and consumption patterns

27. At its seventh session, the Commission on Sustainable Development reaffirmed the international work programme on sustainable consumption and production patterns adopted at its third session in 1995. The Commission further identified four priority areas to be incorporated into the work programme. These are (a) effective policy development and implementation; (b) natural resource management and cleaner production; (c) globalization and its impacts on consumption and production patterns; and (d) urbanization and its impacts on consumption and production patterns.

28. As task manager for the work on changing consumption patterns, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs undertook a number of activities to further the implementation of the international work programme. In the area of effective policy development and implementation, the Department continued its work on the extension of the existing United Nations Guidelines on Consumer Protection to include sustainable consumption. The revised text of the United Nations Guidelines, adopted by the Commission at its seventh session, was endorsed by the Economic and Social Council in July 1999 and approved by the General Assembly at its fifty-fourth session.

29. In the area of natural resource management and cleaner production, the Department, in collaboration with UNEP, organized an expert group meeting in Washington, D.C., in August 1999 to examine the design and implementation of government policies to promote the adoption of environmental managerial accounting by enterprises. Experience has shown that environmental managerial accounting helps management to identify and measure the full spectrum of environmental costs of production and the economic benefits of pollution prevention and cleaner production. Environmental managerial accounting offers a tool to integrate those costs and benefits in day-to-day business decision-making.

30. UNEP and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO) continue their promotion of cleaner production through national cleaner production centres. An important initiative in this area has been the promotion of investments in cleaner production. Pilot activities have taken place in several developing countries, with support from the

Government of Norway. Within the same framework, UNEP organized an expert group meeting on financial engineering instruments to promote investments in cleaner production (Kaunas, Lithuania, 18-20 October 1999). UNEP is also planning to hold its sixth international high-level seminar on cleaner production, as well as an international pollution prevention summit, in Montreal, Canada, in October 2000. In this connection, the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, in cooperation with UNEP and UNIDO, organized a regional expert meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean to develop guidelines for the design and implementation of national cleaner technology strategies (Bogotá, October 1999).

Oceans and seas

31. The Commission on Sustainable Development, in its decision 7/1 on oceans and seas, set out the major challenges at the national, regional and global levels and identified areas of particular concern. The Commission recommended specific action for addressing these challenges and concerns and, among other initiatives, recommended that the General Assembly establish, under its aegis, an open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and seas.

32. Acting upon the results of the review by the Commission, the General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session, adopted resolution 54/33, in which the Assembly decided to establish an open-ended informal consultative process in order to facilitate its annual review of developments in ocean affairs. By the same resolution the General Assembly also decided on the organization of meetings within the framework of the consultative process.

33. The open-ended informal consultative process on oceans and seas is scheduled to take place in New York from 30 May to 2 June 2000. The meetings will be coordinated by two co-chairpersons appointed by the President of the General Assembly in consultation with Member States, taking into account the need for representation from developed and developing countries. The consultative process will review developments in ocean affairs, identify particular issues to be considered by the General Assembly and emphasize areas where coordination and cooperation at the intergovernmental and inter-agency levels should be enhanced.

34. The specific follow-up to decision 7/1 has also been a key concern of the Subcommittee on Oceans and Coastal Areas, which has met twice since the seventh session of the Commission on Sustainable Development to consider, *inter alia*, the implementation of decision 7/1. A summary of the work of the Subcommittee is contained in paragraphs 18 to 20 of the present report.

IV. Follow-up to the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly for the review and appraisal of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States

35. The General Assembly convened its twenty-second special session in New York on 27 and 28 September 1999 to review and appraise the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States. The General Assembly adopted a declaration in which Member States reaffirmed the principles of and their commitments to the sustainable development of small island developing States. The declaration calls on the international community to provide effective means, including financial and technical resources, to support the sustainable development efforts of small island developing States. The General Assembly also adopted a review document entitled "State of progress and initiatives for the future implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States". The document set forth recommendations for action in priority areas, as well as the means of implementation of these recommendations, to complement and reinforce current activities in the implementation of the Programme of Action.

36. Information on specific follow-up action to the outcome of the twenty-second special session of the General Assembly, including action by regional commissions, is contained in a report of the Secretary-General to be submitted to the General Assembly for its consideration at its fifty-fifth session.

V. Outcome of the eighth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development that calls for action by the United Nations system

37. The Commission on Sustainable Development adopted a number of decisions at its eighth session, including decisions on agriculture, integrated planning and management of land resources, economic growth, trade and investment, financial resources and mechanisms and preparations for the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development. The forthcoming sixteenth meeting of IACSD, as well as meetings of other relevant inter-agency bodies, will review arrangements for specific follow-up actions to these outcomes. The main elements of the Commission's decisions that relate to the work of the United Nations system are outlined below.

Agriculture

38. The Commission urged the international community to fulfil the commitments for financial assistance for promoting sustainable agriculture and rural development (SARD). The Commission urged the international community, including the United Nations system and the international financial institutions, to provide support to institutional reform and development of market infrastructure and access for achieving SARD in developing countries. Governments and the international community, including the United Nations system, were further urged to assist developing countries in developing strategies and in implementing measures to attract and promote private capital flows and investment in sustainable agriculture and rural development.

39. The Commission urged Governments, relevant international organizations and the private sector to increase their contribution to capacity-building and the transfer of appropriate technology, in particular environmentally sound technology, to developing countries, as well as to promote partnerships for fostering sustainable agriculture and food security and rural development. International financial institutions were encouraged to further promote the transfer of technology and capacity-building, with emphasis on the allocation of funds to enable developing countries to achieve food security through enhanced agricultural production, including food storage systems and agro-food industries.

40. Relevant international, regional and national bodies and the private sector were further encouraged to support developing countries to increase research and achieve integrated natural resource management, appropriate technology and sustainable agricultural methods and to disseminate information on the results of their research and its applicability. In this regard, the Commission invited the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) to increase research and pursue partnerships in integrated natural resource management and to disseminate the results.

41. The Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, particularly in Africa and the governing body of the Global Environment Facility were encouraged to promote the use of their relevant mechanisms to support SARD-related initiatives, in line with national programmes, that result, *inter alia*, in the conservation and sustainable use of agro-biodiversity.

42. The Commission urged the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and other relevant international organizations, particularly the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to assist countries in developing concrete policies and actions for the implementation of Agenda 21 concerning sustainable production and farming methods aimed at achieving the goals of the World Food Summit and of SARD. In particular, FAO was encouraged to develop a cross-sectoral programme on organic agriculture as part of its contribution to SARD. IFAD was encouraged to strengthen its assistance to rural communities in developing countries in support of their efforts to achieve SARD, primarily as a means to eradicate rural poverty.

43. The Commission urged Governments and relevant international organizations to further develop innovative institutional mechanisms to ensure effective stakeholder participation in decision-making related to SARD. As part of the ongoing review of progress towards SARD, and within existing structures and resources, FAO and the secretariat of the Commission

on Sustainable Development, in consultation with Governments, relevant international organizations and all major groups, were invited to continue the stakeholder dialogue on SARD, including facilitating the adequate and meaningful participation of stakeholders from developing countries. In preparing for the tenth session of the Commission on Sustainable Development and the 10-year review of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, this dialogue should emphasize the identification of specific examples and the development of case studies that illustrate or support the principles of sustainable agriculture and rural development.

Integrated planning and management of land resources

44. The Commission urged Governments and the international community to fulfil the financial commitments to effectively support the implementation of integrated planning and management of land resources in developing countries, taking into account priorities identified by those countries. The Commission encouraged the international community and United Nations agencies and organizations to provide technical and financial support to the efforts of Governments to minimize socio-economic obstacles related to access to land and security of tenure.

45. The Commission also urged the United Nations system to support Governments in further promoting the implementation of the Habitat Agenda, adopted by the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) (Istanbul, June 1996) and in linking it to the implementation of Agenda 21, including local Agenda 21 programmes. Support for the five-year review of Habitat II was encouraged.

46. The Commission further urged Governments, in particular those of developed countries, and international organizations to provide technological assistance to developing countries and countries with economies in transition to implement the integrated planning and management of land resources. The United Nations and other international development organizations were urged to assist developing countries in their efforts to achieve integrated planning and management of land resources, through financial support, transfer of environmentally sound technologies on mutually agreed terms, capacity-building and education and training.

Economic growth, trade and investment

47. The Commission urged Governments, particularly in developed countries and, as appropriate, international organizations to improve market access, provide technical assistance and establish capacity-building initiatives in favour of developing countries and countries with economies in transition to help them to increase export opportunities, promote diversified export-oriented production and enhance their ability to trade, and to implement their commitments in existing multilateral agreements, including WTO agreements. The Commission encouraged Governments and international organizations to continue studies and work on impacts of trade liberalization on developing economies.

48. The Commission called on Governments to fully implement the Plan of Action adopted at the tenth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) and, in particular, to examine the use and effect, particularly on trade, of incentives to attract foreign direct investment with high technological content. UNCTAD should analyse all aspects of existing international agreements relevant to transfer of technology to be supported, as appropriate, by developed country funding.

49. The Commission urged Governments and international organizations to further consider the relationship between multilateral environmental agreements and WTO agreements, including the relationship between the Convention on Biological Diversity and trade-related intellectual property rights. The Commission considered it essential to improve dialogue and cooperation between trade, environment and other relevant policy makers at the national level, as well as among relevant international organizations, including secretariats of multilateral environmental agreements. UNEP and UNCTAD were urged to continue to study and examine economic and development implications of multilateral environmental agreements.

50. The Commission encouraged Governments and international organizations to address the potential risks that may arise from the volatility of short-term capital flows. The Commission recommended that Governments and international organizations, in cooperation with relevant private sector organizations and stakeholders, undertake relevant measures to

enhance the potential of investment, including foreign direct investment, to contribute to sustainable development. Governments and international organizations were encouraged to develop, as appropriate, mechanisms for the environmental assessment of export credit projects.

Financial resources and mechanisms

51. The Commission encouraged Governments to promote the use of innovative financial mechanisms, and called on them, in cooperation with international organizations and major groups, to continue to engage in study and research on ways to make such mechanisms more practical and effective.

52. The Commission called for the Global Environmental Facility to be strengthened and called for its mandate to be broadened.

53. The Commission called on the international organizations and Governments to initiate further innovative pilot projects and partnership arrangements that encourage the private sector and other major groups to finance sustainable development.

54. The Commission urged international organizations to improve coordination of their work in the area of finance for sustainable development in order to avoid duplication and to raise their effectiveness, focusing on their respective area of competence where they have a clear comparative advantage. In this regard, better cooperation and dialogue is needed between international organizations, including the Bretton Woods institutions, WTO, UNCTAD, UNEP, UNDP and the Global Environmental Facility.

Preparations for the ten-year review of progress achieved in the implementation of the outcome of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development

55. The Commission invited the United Nations Secretariat, in close cooperation with UNEP, the regional commissions and the secretariats of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development-related conventions, as well as other relevant organizations within and outside the United Nations system, including international and regional financial institutions, to support preparatory activities, in particular at the national and regional levels, in a coordinated and mutually reinforcing way.

56. The Commission invited the Governing Council of UNEP to promote the coherent implementation of the environmental dimension of sustainable development in the United Nations system and to provide its views to the Commission at its tenth session as an important input to the preparatory process on the environmental aspects of the implementation of Agenda 21 and the other outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development.

57. The Commission invited all relevant United Nations organizations and the secretariats of conventions related to the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development to review and assess their respective programmes of work since the Conference and to report to the Commission at its tenth session on progress made in the implementation of sustainable development-related objectives.

VI. Constraints faced by the United Nations system in the field of sustainable development and recommendations on how to address these constraints

58. In the report submitted last year to the General Assembly,[3] an analysis was made of the main constraints faced by organizations of the United Nations system in the implementation of Agenda 21. The report highlighted the negative impacts on programme delivery caused by lack of financial resources, inadequate institutional capacity, cumbersome reporting relationships and inconsistent decision-making by the governing bodies of United Nations agencies. While progress has been made in some areas through reform efforts, including in inter-agency coordination, those obstacles identified in the report continue to hinder programme implementation in many instances. The nominal zero growth approach that has been applied to the budgeting processes of United Nations organizations has made it increasingly difficult for them to undertake new initiatives in dealing with emerging challenges.

59. Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the United Nations system has made significant progress in policy formulation and development. Through inter-agency collaboration and joint efforts with national research institutions and major groups, organizations of the United Nations system have helped advance the understanding and awareness of sustainable development principles and practices among all stakeholders worldwide. As a new paradigm for achieving social, economic and environmental well-being, sustainable development has been globally recognized as a viable path to an equitable, just and prosperous society, not only for the present generation, but also for the generations to come. Yet the fresh, innovative ideas that have developed, often on the basis of local experiences and successes, are not being disseminated and replicated on a larger scale because of resource constraints. Many sustainable development projects, painstakingly designed and formulated, have been shelved due to lack of funds.

60. In this regard, it is worth noting that little progress has been made so far in implementing some 300 projects that small island developing States submitted to the meeting of representatives of donors and small island developing States in February 1999. A large number of those projects had been designed and formulated with the technical assistance of organizations of the United Nations system. Those same institutions have been obliged to turn down repeated requests for implementing the submitted projects, as funds for them have not been forthcoming. While there has been some donor interest in supporting some of the projects, there has been little evidence of any concerted donor action. Assistance may be necessary to revise or reframe the project proposals so as to attract donor support. To this end the United Nations system should play a supportive role.

61. The governing structures of organizations in the United Nations system have not always facilitated inter-agency coordination. The task manager approach that has evolved successfully since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development has to operate on the basis of guidance by the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations system, which does not necessarily synchronize its deliberation and decision-making processes. Decisions reached via the inter-agency collaboration procedure at IACSD need to be reported back to the respective governing body of each member agency for authorization or approval. This tends to prolong the interval between agreement at IACSD and actual implementation of a decision.

62. The increase in mandates and programme activities that cut across sectors has also posed a challenge to inter-agency collaboration at the level of programme delivery. Sustainable development projects require an integrative approach to project design and execution. The need for collaboration is especially strong in the field of health, which was identified as a key area for action in the previous report, as well as in energy, freshwater and changing production and consumption patterns. The prevalent practice of formulating development projects largely within the context of each individual agency's mandate or area of expertise fails to maximize resource and project impacts.

63. Successful action to remove these constraints requires fundamental reforms. However, some measures are worth considering and could be adopted on a provisional basis. Closer coordination at the regional and country levels should be fostered among organizations of the United Nations system. As an initial measure, regional and country offices of programmes, funds and specialized agencies could improve communications and sharing of information on regional and country programmes in order to identify areas for collaboration and savings. Regional projects on climate change, biodiversity, desertification and pollution prevention offer great potentials for synergy. In due course such collaboration may lead to joint programming to further consolidate gains in resource efficiency through common project design and implementation.

64. In this connection, more strenuous efforts should be made to promote cooperation with regional commissions, regional development banks and regional economic and technical cooperation organizations, whose knowledge of the specific region should be fully tapped in project design and execution. Participation by major groups and the private sector in the design and implementation of development programmes at the country and field levels will contribute to development goals and objectives by bringing diverse perspectives on national and local needs and by acting as partners in the process. Such cooperative arrangements may also open up new possibilities for donor support.

65. Inter-agency coordination at the country level may also benefit from the Common Country Assessment within the United Nations Development Assistance Framework which provides an important entry point for initiating and conducting the coordination process. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework provides an essential planning framework for the development operations of the United Nations system at the country level. The common country assessment is the first step for the preparation of the Assistance Framework. It generates a common understanding of the causes of development problems as well as the needs and priorities of a country. Similarly, the World Bank's comprehensive development framework, which is in the pilot phase of implementation, promotes a long-term holistic approach to development, and opens up opportunities for cooperation and consultation among Governments, donors, civil society, the private sector and the United Nations system.

66. At the intergovernmental level, policy-making by governing bodies could benefit from enhanced communication, including through such approaches as joint sessions. The special high-level meetings of the Economic and Social Council with representatives of the Bretton Woods institutions have succeeded in breaking stereotypes and conventional mindsets and have opened up new horizons for development cooperation at the policy-making level. These initiatives are also applicable to other intergovernmental forums where improved exchange of information on resolutions and decisions and joint sessions on common tasks can pave the way for inter-agency coordination at the programme and project level.

Notes

[1] *Report of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, Rio de Janeiro, 3-14 June 1992* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.93.I.8 and corrigenda), vol. I: *Resolutions adopted by the Conference*, resolution 1, annex II.

[2] General Assembly resolution S-19/2, annex.

[3] A/54/131-E/1999/75.

[4] For background information on the establishment of IACSD, see ibid.

[5] A/52/871-S/1998/318.

[6] A/53/463.